YOUR OLD HOUSE
Researching and Renovating Your Home

A publication of the Special Collections Division of the Akron-Summit County Public Library
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**COVER:**

697 West Market Street, Akron, OH

Home of S. Samuel Miller, founder of Mohawk Rubber Company

from *West Hill Sketch Book* published by the West Hill Land Company, ca. 1905
How old is my house? Who built it? Who lived here? How did this neighborhood develop? How can I restore and renovate my house? These are some of the questions new or established homeowners may have about their homes. Researching the history of your house can provide answers to these questions, and may possibly reveal other interesting facts about the house you live in. There are a number of resources at the library and in our community that can assist with your quest for clues and answers to your home’s history. This pathfinder includes a selected list of resources that may be found at the Akron-Summit County Public Library, as well as other institutions in our community. For assistance with any of these resources, or help finding additional information, please visit our website www.akronlibrary.org/specialcollections or contact the Special Collections Division at Main Library at 330-643-9030 or speccollections@akronlibrary.org

RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF YOUR HOUSE AT THE AKRON-SUMMIT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

City Directories
City directories are an excellent source for learning more about the people who lived in your house. City directories, usually published annually, are divided into two primary sections. The alphabetical directory lists businesses, organizations and heads of the household, including place of employment and/or occupation and name of spouse. Some early directories may also include the names of children. City directories can help to approximate the year a house was built. The street directory is arranged alphabetically by the name of the street, and lists
residents by address. City directories may also provide clues to
the ethnic makeup of a neighborhood. A scan of street listings
may reveal that most residents were of a particular ethnic or
cultural group. One caveat of city directory research is that
street numbering systems often changed during the early part of
the twentieth century.

**Akron City Directories**
1859-present (including most years for Cuyahoga Falls and
Barberton)
Akron City Directories for the years 1859-1969 are also
available in a digital format and may be browsed or searched via
the Library’s website from the following link:
https://www.akronlibrary.org/locations/main-library/
special-collections/genealogy/historic-city-directories

**Biography File**
In these files may be found copies of newspaper articles about
local individuals that have appeared in the Akron Beacon
Journal and other publications. It is arranged alphabetically.

**Obituaries**
Obituaries can be a valuable source of biographical information
about local residents. Special Collections holds the Akron
Beacon Journal on microfilm from 1841, and obituaries are
indexed in the Hayes Research Library’s Ohio Obituary Index,
https://www.rbhayes.org/main/ohio-obituary-index/, a
statewide index to obituaries published in a variety of
newspapers and other sources including the Akron Beacon
Journal and its predecessor papers.
Ohio Death Certificates, 1908-1953
Biographical information included on death certificates typically includes birth date, occupation, place of birth, parents’ names and place of birth, and cause of death. Digital images of these records may be searched and viewed online through FamilySearch: https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1307272. FamilySearch requires the creation of a free account to use their resources.

County and City Histories
In the late 19th century, many county histories were published. These books frequently included biographical sketches about members of a community. Special Collections has an extensive collection of city and county histories for Summit, as well as other counties in Ohio, and other states. Additional full text local histories are available through the Library’s Genealogy & Local History databases. Some may also be found on Google Books at http://books.google.com/ and on Internet Archive at https://archive.org.

Family Histories
Special Collections owns a large collection of published family histories. Check the online catalog or consult with a Special Collections staff member for more information about this collection.
**Estate Records**
Estate records can provide valuable information about former house owners. Special Collections has Summit County Probate Court estate records on microfilm for 1841-1944. You may browse the index using the link under "View Images in this Collection" in the Ohio Probate Records, 1789-1996 collection at https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1992421.

**Census**
The United States started taking a census of its citizens in 1790. Before 1850, censuses only name the head of household. Beginning in 1850, they name each individual in the household. Depending upon the year of the census, you may learn much additional information about those listed. You may access census records using the following databases: American Ancestors, Ancestry Library Edition, FamilySearch, Fold3, Heritage Quest and MyHeritage. See the Library website for our list of Genealogy & Local History databases.

**Land and Property Records**
Special Collections has microfilm of the Grantor Index to Deeds from Trumbull, Portage, Medina, and Stark Counties, 1795-1840 and the Grantor and Grantee Indexes for Summit County, 1840-1914. You may also access them by using the FamilySearch catalog, https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog. We also have a Summit County Grantee/Grantor Land Records Index, 1795-1840 in print.

**Atlases, Plat Books and Maps**
Special Collections maintains a collection of 19th and 20th century Summit County maps and historical atlases. See a Special Collections staff member for more information about this collection, or visit the Online Map Room on Summit Memory, https://www.summitmemory.org/digital/custom/map.
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1867-1970
These detailed maps, produced by the D.A. Sanborn Company, depict commercial and residential sections of cities in the United States. Each map indicates the site, size and shape, building material, and use of homes, commercial buildings and factories. Sanborn maps for Ohio are accessible from Library website's list of Genealogy & Local History databases. Special Collections also has these maps on microfilm for the city of Akron and some communities in Summit County.

Other Genealogical and Local Historical Sources in Special Collections
Special Collections maintains many other genealogical and local history resources in multiple formats that may provide additional information about former homeowners. Our Archives Catalog (link at www.akronlibrary.org/research/databases-by-title#a) includes records for many items in our collections, including photographs. In addition, our digital collections site www.SummitMemory.org includes thousands of images of Summit County, including many of local houses. For further assistance, check with a Special Collections staff member, or visit the Special Collections website at: www.akronlibrary.org/specialcollections.
COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL RECORDS

Summit County Fiscal Officer
175 S. Main St.
Akron, OH 44308
https://fiscaloffice.summitoh.net/

The Fiscal Office holds records and documents pertaining to real estate taxes and property values.

Auditor’s Division (3rd Floor)
330-643-2636
• Real estate assessments
• Property appraisal
• Estate taxes
• Personal property taxes
• Mobile home taxes

Recorder’s Division (4th Floor)
330-643-2712
• Deeds
• Mortgages
• Plats and Tax maps
• Easements
• Financial statements
• Land contracts

Treasurer’s Division (3rd Floor)
330-643-2587
• Real estate taxes, delinquent taxes and tax certificate liens
OTHER LOCAL RESOURCES

The University of Akron Archival Services
Polsky Building LL10
225 S. Main St. (Enter from High St.)
Akron, OH 44325-1702
330-972-7670
www.uakron.edu/libraries/archives/

The University of Akron Archival Services collects, preserves, and provides access to primary and secondary source materials that document the history of the University of Akron and the region. It is also a local government records repository for a nine-county region that includes Summit and Portage counties and holds a variety of government records that may be useful in researching the history of a house.

Check their website for current hours.
BOOKS AND ONLINE RESOURCES

House History Research
These titles in the Special Collections Division may provide additional suggestions for researching the history of your house and neighborhood.

National Register of Historic Places Nomination Forms for Summit County

Residential Architecture of Roy Firestone: Summit County, Ohio
Two oversized scrapbooks, with alphabetical and street indexes Ohio--Summit County--Architecture (Reference copies only) Also on our Online Books page.

Bauman, Libby
The Century Homes of Bath
977.136 B347ce

Dept. of Planning & Urban Development, City of Akron
Akron Historic Landmark Survey
720.28 Ak733a

Frazier, Kevan Delany
Model Industrial Subdivisions: Goodyear Heights and Firestone Park and the Town Planning Movement in Akron, Ohio, 1910-1920
977.136 F848mo

Gordon, Stephen C.
How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory
Ohio--History G (Circulating copy in Science & Technology.)
House History Research (continued)

Green, Betsy J.
Discovering the History of Your House and Your Neighborhood
907.2 G795d

Houck, Maurcia DeLean
If These Walls Could Talk-- : An Easy Guide to Tracking Your House’s Genealogy
728.3707 H835i

Howe Barbara J., et al.
Houses and Homes: Exploring Their History
307.336 H842h

Light, Sally
House Histories: A Guide to Tracing the Genealogy of Your Home
728.37 L723h

Myers, Sharon
The First 119 Homes in Silver Lake: And How the Village Developed 1808-1930
977.136 M996f

Newkirk, Lois for the Hudson Heritage Association
Hudson: A Survey of Historic Buildings in an Ohio Town
720.9771 H885
Architectural Style

Architectural styles vary greatly among American cities and neighborhoods. A number of factors contribute to this. In Akron, for example, many homes in Goodyear Heights are of the English cottage architectural style. The reason for this is that F.A. Seiberling, the founder of Goodyear and developer of Goodyear Heights, had a preference for that style. The Library has many resources that can help you determine the style of your home.

Howard, Hugh
How Old Is This House?
Science & Technology Division 728.028 H849h

Massey, James C.
Science & Technology Division 728.372 M416h

Morgan, William
Abrams Guide to American House Styles
Science & Technology Division 728.3709 M849ab

Phillips, Steven H.
Old House Dictionary: An Illustrated Guide to American Domestic Architecture
Science & Technology Division 720.321 P563o
RESTORING AND RENOVATING YOUR HOUSE

Restoring or renovating an old house can be a rewarding experience. The library has an extensive collection of books to help you plan, design, and carry out your plans.

Jenrette, Richard Hampton
Adventures with Old Houses
Science & Technology Division 643.7 J54ad

Lawson, Jeanne B.
Complete Guide to Renovating Older Homes
Science & Technology Division 643.7 L425co

Lubeck, Aaron
Green Restorations, Sustainable Building and Historic Homes
Science & Technology Division 643.7 L928gr

AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS

Our Culture & AV Division has many how-to videos for renovating your home. A selection follows, but be sure to check the library’s catalog for more.

So You’re Renovating! Do-It-Yourself Video Collection Fine Homebuilding DVD Workshop
Today’s Homeowner with Danny Lipford
Ask This Old House television program
PERIODICALS
These titles are available in the magazines and newspapers section of the Science & Technology Division at Main Library. Some may also be available at branch libraries. Check the online catalog for a complete list of holdings.

American Bungalow: www.americanbungalow.com
Arts & Crafts Homes: http://artsandcraftshomes.com
Early American Life: www.ealonline.com
Old-House Journal: www.oldhousejournal.com
Preservation: www.preservationnation.org/magazine
This Old House: www.thisoldhouse.com/toh
Traditional Home Magazine: www.traditionalhome.com
Victorian Homes: www.beckettmedia.com/vh

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

Cleveland Restoration Society and Preservation Resource Center of Northeastern Ohio
Sarah Benedict House
3751 Prospect Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44115-2705
216-426-1000
www.clevelandrestoration.org/
As a statewide and local partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, this organization provides free technical assistance, resources, educational programs, and events to individuals and organizations pursuing historic preservation opportunities in Northeast Ohio. A monthly e-newsletter gives information on regional events, workshops, and the latest on local & national preservation news.
Heritage Home Program
http://www.heritagehomeprogram.org/
The Heritage Home program of the Cleveland Restoration Society offers free technical advice, construction resources, “how to” articles, contractor bid review, and custom work specifications to owners of older homes. Construction staff can also make a free site visit to your property to look at old house maintenance issues and make recommendations for preservation or repair projects. Great low interest financing is also available for homeowner projects.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION SERVICES

Historic Preservation Planning Program
National Park Service
1201 Eye St., NW, 2255
Washington, DC 20005
www.nps.gov/preservation-planning/

National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye St., NW
8th Floor (MS 2280)
Washington, DC 20005
202-354-2213
www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm
National Trust for Historic Preservation
2600 Virginia Avenue NW
Suite 1100
Washington DC 20037
800-944-6847
https://savingplaces.org/

State Historic Preservation Office
Ohio History Connection
800 E. 17th Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43211-2474
614-298-2000
shpo@ohiohistory.org
https://www.ohiohistory.org/preserve/state-historic-preservation-office
Sponsors “Building Doctor” programs to help homeowners identify and solve problems associated with old houses.

Progress Through Preservation of Greater Akron
Preservation House
2074 W. Market St.
Akron, OH 44313
330-374-3787
www.preservationakron.org
A non-profit organization whose goal is to raise the consciousness of preservation in Akron and Summit County by actively encouraging the preservation, maintenance, restoration, and adaptive reuse of buildings, sites, and neighborhoods that are of historic or architectural importance. Meetings with guest speakers are held at various local historic sites throughout the year. In addition to cooperating and participating with other community organizations and local governments, PTP recognizes our community’s preservation efforts, sponsors conferences, tours and workshops, and publishes a newsletter.
Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens
Preservation and Restoration Consultants
714 N. Portage Path
Akron, OH 44303
330-315-3298
https://www.stanhywet.org/education-resources
Stan Hywet has experts in architectural restoration, renovation and collections preservation on staff who can assist you with restoration and preservation of your home, office, historic landmark, or personal collection.

USEFUL WEBSITES

National Park Service
Technical Preservation Services for Historic Buildings
Preservation Briefs
http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties
http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm